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P R E S S R E L E A S E

German companies do not believe their staff are sufficiently qualified to deal with digital transformation. The digital entrepreneurs at Unternehmer-Schmiede develop senior executives to manage digitisation.

- **etventure study shows that senior executives lack the experience and expertise to implement digitisation measures.**
- **Unternehmer-Schmiede identifies, develops and connects digital entrepreneurs to manage digitisation in SMEs and large corporates**
- **Developing an international development programme for future digital entrepreneurs at TAKKT AG, supporting Certeo en route to becoming an agile networked organisation**

Berlin / Cologne, 19 April 2017 – Problem area digital expertise. Almost 60 per cent of large German companies believe their staff are not sufficiently qualified to deal with digital transformation. That is the finding of a current representative survey by digital consultancy and company builder etventure in collaboration with GfK Nuremberg and YouGov USA*. The human factor therefore plays a crucial role in the success of digital transformation in companies and there is a major requirement for digital expertise. Unternehmer-Schmiede is tackling this issue. The joint venture between etventure and HR and management consultancy Kienbaum recruits, coaches and develops senior executives to become digital entrepreneurs. Through its range of services, Unternehmer-Schmiede has already acquired clients like TAKKT AG, Certeo, LV 1871 and Garbe Group in its first year of trading.

Lack of digital skills and defensiveness among staff are obstacles to digitisation in large German companies

According to the etventure study, large German and US companies believe that digitisation will primarily lead to staff needing a different set of skills (Germany: 91 per cent, USA: 97 per cent). But while almost all US corporations (90 per cent) are already convinced that their staff have the necessary digital skills, that is only the case for a minority in Germany (42 per cent).

“The survey clearly shows that large German companies have so far neglected to prepare their staff for the digital transformation,” explained Mathias Weigert, CEO of Unternehmer-Schmiede. “There is a similar level of scepticism about digitisation among the workforce. In 37 per cent of German corporations, processes for digital transformation create uncertainty among employees. Making it all the more important to have senior executives with digital expertise and an entrepreneurial mindset who

can drive forward the digital transformation and can also inspire other employees and make them aware of the changes needed.”

This requires a special kind of person with specific abilities. Because a digital entrepreneur must firstly understand the corporate world, but primarily act like an entrepreneur, think in a user-centric way, be a master of digital tools, personify a start-up culture, consistently drive forward change, and use agile management and communication methods. Such a profile is very hard to find in the market, which is why Unternehmer-Schmiede is aiming to find a holistic solution. The Berlin-based joint venture not only analyses how digital its client organisations already are and which profiles and skills they still lack, but also looks for potential talent both internally and externally, and develops digital entrepreneurs using individual on-the-job training and coaching by experienced mentors. The programme has been developed by digital entrepreneurs for digital entrepreneurs.

Innovative HR concepts and an agile work culture

This is the approach Unternehmer-Schmiede has already used to support its clients in digital transformation across a wide range of sectors. For TAKKT AG, the team at Unternehmer-Schmiede designed a development programme to train future digital entrepreneurs and recruited suitable young talent for this, in both Europe and the USA. As part of an 18-month programme, the candidates passed through various roles and positions both in Germany and abroad, thereby learning all the relevant skills and methods needed to drive forward the digital agenda for this mail order business.

Unternehmer-Schmiede is advising Certo, a manufacturer of office and business equipment, on a comprehensive structural transformation to becoming a networked organisation and supporting the development of an agile corporate and work culture. This involved developing new, innovative organisational structures in the form of interdisciplinary teams that can be assembled quickly and on a project basis depending on requirements. Alexander Ketzler, CEO of Certo, said: “Without the support of Unternehmer-Schmiede, we would not be in the position we are today, on our way to becoming a completely digital and networked organisation. The team were always quick and pragmatic and used their in-depth expertise to show us new ways of doing things and especially gave us very practical support during implementation.”

***About the etventure study “Digital transformation and cooperation with start-ups in large German and US companies”**

Based on the questionnaire prepared by digital consultancy and start-up designers etventure, GfK Nuremberg and YouGov USA conducted simultaneously in Germany and the USA a telephone survey of large companies with annual turnover of at least EUR 250 million or USD 250 million, respectively. The survey was conducted on the basis of 294 face-to-face interviews (Germany: 135, USA: 159) in the period from 28 November 2016 to 24 January 2017. Respondents were decision makers concerned

with the issue of digital transformation in the respective companies. Further details about the study can also be found at <http://www.etventure.de/innovationsstudien>.

About Unternehmer-Schmiede

Unternehmer-Schmiede GmbH aims to support SMEs and large corporates in dealing with the staffing issues associated with digital transformation and, by developing digital entrepreneurial skills, to make them successful in the long term. To do so, Unternehmer-Schmiede links the recruitment and selection of suitable candidates with structured profile development and individual on-the-job mentoring. Established as a joint venture between etventure and Kienbaum, Unternehmer-Schmiede builds on the digitisation and implementation expertise of etventure and combines this experience with Kienbaum's decades-long expertise in HR and change management. The company's clients include TAKTT AG, Certo, LV 1871 and Garbe Group. The company has offices in Berlin and Munich. www.unternehmer-schmiede.de

About etventure:

“Only true entrepreneurs drive digital transformation.” Digital consultancy and company builder etventure identifies, develops and tests digital business approaches across sectors. Based on its two core business areas of Corporate Innovation and Startup Hub, etventure supports and advises companies on their digital transformation, both within the existing core organisation and by creating new digital business models. It also establishes its own start-ups. Its corporate clients include insurance company Wüstenrot & Württembergische Versicherungen, Deutsche Bahn, Daimler Financial Services, Franz Haniel & Cie., SMS group, Schwan-STABILO and steel company Klöckner. etventure was established in 2010 by its directors Philipp Depiereux, Philipp Herrmann and Dr. Christian Lüdtkke. The etventure team consists of over 250 digital experts and entrepreneurs at offices in Berlin, Hamburg, Munich, Essen, Stuttgart, Hong Kong, London, New York, Paris and Zurich. www.etventure.com

About Kienbaum:

Kienbaum Consultants International is an HR and management consultancy that puts people at the heart of its range of consulting services. The company specialises in moving people in organisations, making changes that lead to success. Kienbaum works in the fields of Executive Search, Human Capital Services, Change and Organisational Consultancy, and Communication. Its multi-disciplinary teams have access to many decades of consultancy experience, in-depth sector expertise and the application-orientated specialist findings of the Kienbaum research institute. Kienbaum was established in Germany more than 70 years ago and is now a family-run partner enterprise. In addition to its head office in Cologne, the consultancy has offices in 18 countries on four continents. www.kienbaum.com

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